DIVIDED LOYALTIES IN SOUTHERN ILLINOIS DURING THE CIVIL WAR

BY
JASPER WILLIAM CROSS, JR.
B. Ed., Southern Illinois State Normal University, 1937
A.M., University of Missouri, 1939

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SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN
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In this study the author has attempted to present a picture of Southern Illinois during the Civil War. It is a pioneer attempt to treat a region that is not easy to describe or classify. Realizing the difficulties attendant upon any study of popular sentiment, the author recognizes that it is impossible to note and evaluate all phases of public opinion. It is further recognized that terms such as "loyal," "disloyal," "pro-Southern," and the like are relative and cannot be taken as absolute designations.

At the opening of the period covered by this study, Southern Illinois was a homogenous, continguous group of sixteen rural counties shaped somewhat like an inverted triangle with the peak at Cairo and the top running from Chester to Carmi. Within this area a great majority of the inhabitants were Southern by migration or extraction and were thoroughly Democratic with a deep faith in that party approached only in the most ultra-Democratic parts of the South today. Before and throughout the war the area gave majorities to Democrats for national offices and, almost universally, for local offices. From earliest days the representatives of the region had favored moves for the legalization of slavery, though the institution could not legally exist in Illinois. The two most distinct of these moves came in 1818 with the enactment of the Black Code of Illinois and the unsuccessful attempt in 1823-24 to bring about the calling of a convention to draft a new constitution.

Egypt—as the area was and is called—voted heavily against Lincoln in 1860 and the martyr president was never popular in Southern Illinois, which was almost unanimously against abolitionism in any form. Lincoln's 1864 vote, however, was definitely larger than his 1860 vote. When the war broke out a great deal of concern was expressed in Northern Illinois that, because of family ties and strong party feeling, Egypt might attempt to secede and join the Confederacy.

Indeed, prominent men of the area did oppose armed cooperation with the Union; the use of military force against the C. S. A. was bitterly denounced; and resolutions demanding the division of the state, with Egypt joining the Confederacy, were passed at numerous meetings in the region. It is impossible to determine how much of this opposition was caused by dislike of the administration and how much by sympathy with the South.

The majority of the resolutions declared that the Lincoln administration had failed to try compromise with the Southern leaders and had provoked the war. Egyptians, therefore, felt the South to be the aggrieved party and opposed the use of troops against the Confederacy, declaring that, if troops were used, it was the right and duty of Egypt to leave the Union. Doubtless, at least some of these bold statements were mere bluffs, intended to influence Illinois towards a policy of neutrality.

Nevertheless, when the Ninth (later to be the Thirteenth) Congressional District was called on to raise a regiment of volunteer infantry, it responded quickly and furnished, in addition, several other companies for other regiments. This first Egyptian regiment was followed rapidly by a half-dozen others and the stream of men and boys going into the Union army from Southern Illinois stopped only when the reservoir of available men was empty. Although natives of Southern Illinois were denounced by her Northern neighbors as unpatriotic, secessionist, traitorous, pro-Southern, and disloyal, these same natives were to be found in the armed forces of the Union in far greater percentage than their verbally patriotic accusers. This, it would seem, is the only true measure of patriotism.

The military records of the troops raised in Egypt differ little from those of other troops. Performing the work assigned to them, they were inconspicuously faithful with two exceptions: the One Hundred Ninth and the One Hundred Twenty-Eighth Illinois infantry regiments were noted for their high percentage of desertions. The former regiment, raised mainly in Union county, outstripped the latter, prin-

cipally from Williamson and surrounding counties, and was finally disgraced and sent home under guard. The story of the One Hundred Ninth is contained in a series of letters from the adjutant of the regiment to the editor of the Jonesboro *Gazette* in the winter of 1862-63.

The congressmen from the district present a distinct contrast. In 1860, the incumbent was John Alexander Logan, later to be General and Senator Logan. Before the war, Logan typified the anti-Lincoln, pro-Southern Democrat as he villified the abolitionists and praised the Buchanan administration. At the outbreak of the war—from March until June, 1861—Logan created much apprehension in all of Illinois as he apparently could not determine what course to follow. In June, 1861, he declared himself a Union man, resigned from Congress, returned to Egypt to raise an infantry regiment, and began one of the most amazing about-faces in politics. Within six years, 1859-65, Logan had changed (by degrees, to be sure) from a fire-eating, anti-abolitionist, pro-Southern congressman to as enthusiastic a waver of the bloody shirt and as vehement a Republican as could be found. By so doing, he earned the disapproval of his constituency which after giving him seventy per cent of their votes in 1860, gave him less than fifty per cent in 1866.

Logan's successor in the House was William Joshua "Josh" Allen, a former law partner of Logan and a rabid Democrat who never allowed any circumstance or attempted curb to restrain the expression of his beliefs. Allen was one of a not inconsiderable group of locally prominent Democratic politicians in Egypt who were arbitrarily arrested and illegally confined in the East. Despite this arrest, he was reëlected to Congress less than three months later, in a convincing demonstration of the fact that his attitudes were approved by his constituency. Both before and after his arrest, Allen was unceasing in his bitterly sarcastic diatribes against abolition, abuses of the rights of citizens, the use of armed force to coerce the South, and the failure of the national government to attempt a policy of compromise.

However, in 1864, Allen was narrowly defeated in his

campaign for reëlection by A. J. Kuykendall, a thorough Republican. Allen's defeat was not the result of his own deeds so much as of a vicious, slandering campaign carried on by John A. Logan, his former close friend. Logan flatly declared that Allen had urged a division of Illinois in 1861 and had tried unsuccessfully to induce Logan to lead the military forces of Southern Illinois for the Confederacy. Although Allen promptly denied the charges, the damage was done and Allen was defeated.

Southern Illinois was reported'y overrun by the secret, pro-Southern organization, the Knights of the Golden Circle (or Order of the Sons of Liberty, or Order of the American Knights), although no official records of the order or any exact, verified statement of membership can be found. Many of the prominent men in Egypt—lawyers, doctors, county officials, Congressman Allen, and others of lesser note—were frequently reported to be active members of the group, which presumably was in coöperation with the Confederacy and operating as a "fifth column" in Egypt.

Various individuals and newspapers attempted to expose the Knights during the War, but perhaps the most thorough of these attempts was contained in the Chicago *Tribune* for August 26, 1862. In this paper, the Cairo correspondent compiled a large number of affidavits and sworn and unsworn statements by foes of the KGC. These statements purported to be reports of secret meetings of the Knights and of declarations of a disloyal nature by leaders in Egypt. Despite the semi-official nature of these statements, apparently no legal action was taken by the government.

This fear of an internal conflict was also present in the minds of the United States Marshal for Southern Illinois, David L. Phillips, who acted vigorously in the arrests above mentioned. For the most part, the arrests were of smugglers, traders with the South, and smaller offenders, although a group of arrests in 1862 included two judges, a county attorney, and a congressman (Allen). None of these individuals was imprisoned for long and none of them appears to have suffered any loss of prestige at home as a result of his arrest.

Indeed, in most cases, a record of arbitrary arrest by the Lincoln administration served a man as an asset rather than a liability.

Many of these arrests appear to have been made without warrant; the records now in the National Archives certainly fail to show that the men arrested were given any semblance of a trial or were even informed of the charges against them. It was this procedure, coupled with other factors, which made Abraham Lincoln unpopular in Egypt.

The last attempt of the pro-slavery group in Illinois to secure control of the state came in 1862 when a group attempted to frame a new constitution for Illinois. The new document contained supplementary clauses barring free Negroes from the state and preventing them from voting or holding office in Illinois. These sections were approved almost unanimously in Egypt and by a good majority in the state as a whole, but the body of the constitution (on whose passage the addition of the anti-Negro sections was contingent) was rejected by the state at large although Egypt gave it a good majority. The anti-administration complexion of the convention was heightened by its strong dislike of the Republican governor, Richard Yates.

During the sessions of the Convention, the Chicago *Tribune* openly charged that a large number of the delegates were Knights of the Golden Circle and that the Convention was dominated by a pro-slavery, anti-Union group. A committee of members reported that the charges were based on idle, malicious rumors, and gave the Convention a clean bill of health.

During the war, the office of Provost Marshal was set up in each Congressional District to assist in preserving order, in enrolling draft eligibles, and in arresting deserters. The records of this official for Egypt show no little activity on his part. The Marshal (Isaac N. Phillips) met with quite stubborn resistance in Marion (Williamson county) where the inhabitants refused to be enrolled in July, 1863, until a military force had been imported to assist the enrolment. Martial law was deemed necessary by the Provost Marshal and was

proclaimed in Marion for a brief time. Williamson and Union counties appear to have harbored numerous deserters; these and other counties befriended deserters, punishing those who informed on them and resisting their arrest.

It was in this same Williamson county, in mid-1861, that a military company under Captain Thorndike Brooks had been raised and had departed to join the Confederate army. This company, according to the press of Northern Illinois, was raised largely through the efforts of prominent Democrats in Egypt with every one—especially Congressman Allen and occasionally Congressman Logan—held responsible. Logan's part seems to be well refuted, Allen's less so, while certain minor politicians were never completely vindicated.

Nevertheless, not all of the population of Egypt was opposed to the policies of the administration. A considerable part of Southern Illinois remained vociferously loyal—so vociferously so that one is tempted to question the quality of this loyalty. These persons—apparently largely Republicans —constantly informed on their neighbors and expressed their fears of invasion to Governor Richard Yates.

Most of these fears of invasion centered in Shawneetown (Gallatin county) on the Ohio river, although other Ohio river towns expressed misgivings as to their safety from time to time. Less evidence may be found of fear of an attack across the Mississippi river from Missouri, although certain sources indicate a communication here between rebels and sympathizers in Illinois.

In its best organized form the loyal group in Egypt became part of the Union League of America, with chapters in every county and most towns in Egypt and with some influence as a cohesive force for the Union sentiment. Even in those towns frequently declared "disloyal"—Anna and Marion —chapters of the U. L. A. existed. The most complete church records in Egypt are those of the Methodist church which expressed itself, from the first year of the war, as opposed to slavery and in favor of all efforts to further the prosecution of the war.

Although the Republican-War Democrat fusion became

stronger in Egypt during the war, it never approached domination of the area. It is doubtful whether the Republicans could have shown any appreciable strength without the adherance of the War Democrats. Although the fusionists did control several county offices in about half of the Egyptian counties, no state or national office of any importance was secured by the merged groups until 1864. In that year, while this group was successful in its attempt to elect the congressman from the district as has been noted above, the Democrats retained most of the local and county offices.

If one studies the newspapers of Egypt for the period during the war, a distinct cleavage of opinion is to be found. While a part of this may be explained on purely political grounds, surely some of the bitterness of feeling and violence of invective must have come from deeper underlying convictions held by the editors. Among the strongly anti-administration papers were the Jonesboro *Gazette,* the Cairo *Gazette,* the Cairo *Democrat,* and the Chester *Picket Guard.* In Springfield, the *Illinois State Register* reprinted much Democratic material, while the *Illinois State Journal* stood as a leading Republican organ. In Egypt, Republican papers included the Carbondale *New Era,* the Harrisburg *Chronicle,* the Cairo *War Eagle,* and the Cairo *Daily News.* Chicago and St. Louis dailies also circulated in Egypt and influenced opinion somewhat as well as reprinting some news and propaganda about that area.

In summation, it would seem that we could not declare Southern Illinois disloyal either to the Union or to her own particular ideals. In some cases these ideals were not the ideals of the administration, as in the case of the abolition of slavery. However, the ideal to which Southern Illinois clung was that of compromise and adjustment—an ideal far older in this country than the Republican party then in power, and long a more powerful force than the abolitionist doctrines of New England.

Further, the Egyptians insisted throughout on the doctrine of states rights and the inherent privilege of a state to

manage its own internal affairs—including slavery—without the dictation of a central power. Indeed, Egypt carried the doctrine one step further towards its ultimate point as it asserted the right of Southern Illinois to "secede" from Illinois in the event of too arbitrary prosecution of the war.

Coming as they did from the region below the Mason and Dixon line either by ancestry or birth, the natives of Egypt could hardly be expected to be enthusiastic about the likelihood of engaging in war against their kinsmen and friends. Nevertheless, Southern Illinois did not neglect its duty when the calls for men came during the war; until 1864, when the available supply of man-power was virtually exhausted, Egypt met every demand made upon her for troops with alacrity and supplied more troops proportionately than did Northern Illinois. This certainly refutes the slurring remarks as to the traitorous nature of Egypt so often uttered by these same Northerners.

One must not think, however, that because Southern Illinois was willing to volunteer her aid in the cause of the North that that aid could be drafted without protest. Opposition flared often in resistance to enrolment for the draft and it was perhaps very fortunate that no large-scale draft had to be made in Egypt. Drafting was regarded not only as a practical nuisance but also as an infringement on the inherent rights of individuals; it was therefore fought as were all similar infringements.

Certainly the region was not wholly in sympathy with every act of the Lincoln administration. Certainly it was not in favor of the forcible policy of the government against the seceded states. Yet, it is hard to say that Egypt was disloyal because of this. No area in Illinois and few in the United States surpassed Egypt in her devotion to her country as shown in terms of men supplied. Further, it would seem that Southern Illinois, had she acted early enough, could have seceded to the Confederacy had her desire to do so been keen enough. The presence of Southerners in neighboring Missouri and Kentucky would have rendered this task less difficult than might be believed. Certainly her secession, carrying with her the

strategic port of Cairo, would have been a boon to the South and would have quite possibly changed, for a time, the complexion of the war in the West.

One may declare, then, that Southern Illinois was loyal to her own ideals—states rights and preservation of the Union—contradictory though they may have been, and that she was in no way willing to advocate the disruption of the Union, much as she disliked and censured the acts of its leaders. Out of this contradiction and out of these attitudes came the question of divided loyalties in Southern Illinois.

Bibliographical Note

Among the sources which were found to be most valuable for this study, one must first mention the newspapers of Illinois for the period under survey. The most useful, because of its near completeness, in Southern Illinois is the Jonesboro *Gazette*, a pronouncedly Democratic weekly. Also because of their reprinting of articles from the Egyptian press, were the Springfield dailies—the *Illinois State Journal* (Republican) and the *Illinois State Register* (Democratic)—and the Chicago dailies—the *Times* (Democratic) and the *Tribune* (Republican). To supplement these, the Illinois Historical Survey in Urbana has the collection of newspaper excerpts used by Professor Arthur Charles Cole in writing in *The Era of the Civil War* in the *Centennial History of Illinois*. These excerpts are taken from many Illinois newspapers which are now difficult or impossible to obtain.

The National Archives in Washington yielded a store of manuscript material without which certain sections of this topic—particularly those dealing with arbitrary arrests and the work of the provost marshal—could not have been completed. Among these sources one must list the records of the provost marshal for the Thirteenth Congressional District of Illinois and of the Acting Assistant Provost Marshal General for Illinois, to be found in the War Department division of the Archives, and the Secret Correspondence and the Arrests for Disloyalty records, to be found in the State Department division of the Archives. Numerous other scattered files of letters and papers were examined in these two divisions as well as in the Justice division. The courtesy and information provided by the attendants and staff of the Archives were of invaluable aid and were greatly appreciated.

Manuscript collections used for this study include the Lyman Trumbull collection, of which photostat or typed copies are located in the Illinois Historical Survey; the Richard Yates Collection, in the Illinois State Historical library in Springfield; and the Charles H. Lanphier collection in the same place. Both Trumbull and Yates were Republican war-time leaders, while Lanphier was publisher of the influential *Illinois State Register*; thus their

correspondents include Egyptians of both factions. Unfortunately, the Lanphier collection is rather small.

The author was seriously handicapped by the closing of the manuscripts division of the Library of Congress, since much information was hoped for in the John A. Logan and E. B. Washburne manuscripts. It is also regretted that the museum and collections of the Works Progress Administration at Carbondale, Illinois, have not been in operation long enough to approach completion. However, material there being uncovered and deposited will serve as an invaluable aid in further study of this topic.

VITA

Jasper William Cross, Jr., was born in Reserve, Wisconsin, August 25, 1916. He was graduated from high school at Mayetta, Kansas, in 1932. Entering Southern Illinois State Normal University in 1933, he was graduated therefrom in 1937 with the degree of Bachelor of Education. He was a member of Mu Tau Pi and Zeta Sigma Pi, honorary fraternities, and editor of the college newspaper.

In 1937-38 and in the summers of 1937 and 1938, he was enrolled in the graduate school of the University of Missouri, receiving his Master of Arts degree in June, 1939. His thesis was on "Industrial Relations in the Iron and Steel Industry Since 1933," his major field being economics.

From September, 1938, until June, 1940, he was professor of social studies at Hannibal-LaGrange (Junior) College, Hannibal, Missouri, teaching courses in history, economics, and political science, which were fully accredited by the University of Missouri and affiliated schools.

In the summer of 1939, he attended the University of Minnesota, and in September, 1940, he continued work towards the doctorate at the University of Illinois. From September, 1940, until August, 1941, he completed his class work and spent the year of 1941-42 on his doctoral dissertation collecting material in Springfield, Washington, and Chicago, as well as in Southern Illinois. The dissertation has been directed by Professor J. G. Randall of the University of Illinois.